

I see the distinguished assistant Democratic leader here. He may want to comment on that. I emphasize that we do expect at least a couple, maybe as many as four, votes this afternoon.

I welcome back all Senators of the 106th Congress. I hope this session can come to an early conclusion. It would be very important at this time, considering all that is going on. If we show we can act quickly on the remaining appropriations bills and dispose of the tax and Medicare issues, that will be very positive for our country. I look forward to working with the chairman and senior member of the Appropriations Committee to see if we can get that worked out and see if there is any way that maybe we can complete it by Thursday night when this continuing resolution will expire. We will get more information to all Senators later this afternoon, after consultation with the Democratic leaders.

I yield to Senator REID.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Senator BYRD would like 15 minutes prior to the CR vote, to be divided between him and Senator STEVENS, to talk about that.

During our party conferences, we will find out if we need the two extra votes on bankruptcy. It is my understanding what the leader wants is to have a vote on cloture on bankruptcy. If we have to go through the drill, we will have to have a couple votes before we get to that. I will talk to the people in the Democratic Conference at 12:30 today and report back to the leader as quickly as I can.

I am happy to hear the majority leader talking about moving forward where we left off before the lame duck session started. There has been a tremendous amount of work that has gone into those appropriation bills, the balanced budget problem we have, the add-ons, and the other things the leader has indicated we will try to move, rather than have a CR. I hope we do that. We await the direction of the majority in the next few days so we can go home and have a good Christmas.

Mr. LOTT. I thank Senator REID. We will have further announcements after consultation with the leadership on both sides of the aisle.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the Senator from Arizona.

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO SENATOR THURMOND

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, congratulations to the majority leader, and happy birthday to our President pro tem, STROM THURMOND.

I remember on the 90th birthday of Senator THURMOND, a reporter asked him if he could expect to see STROM on his 100th birthday. Senator THURMOND looked him up and down and said: Well, you look fit enough to me. If you eat right and drink right, you ought to be around to see me then.

All of us are looking forward to the centennial birthday of Senator THURMOND.

#### RETIREMENT OF SENATOR CONNIE MACK

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I rise this morning to express how much I am going to miss our colleague, CONNIE MACK, who retires at the end of this Congress, after three terms in the House of Representatives and two terms in the Senate.

My colleague, the first Republican in the history of the State of Florida ever to be reelected to the U.S. Senate, is a valued part of our party's leadership team. He has managed simultaneously to accomplish great things for the conservative cause while also increasing the level of civility in this body.

One is tempted to call CONNIE MACK Reaganesque in the way that he combines an agreeable disposition with rock-solid principles. As chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, and as a member of the Banking and Finance Committees, he led the successful effort in 1995 to cut congressional spending by 9 percent—the largest cut in 40 years. Connie is one of the people who has led Congress in forcing the Federal Government to put its financial house in order.

He has also left his mark in the areas of medical research and protecting the pristine environment in his home State of Florida. And he has been a warm, amiable gentleman in all seasons and all situations.

I served with CONNIE MACK in the House of Representatives to which he was elected in 1982. That was a pivotal time in our politics, as he has pointed out. America had made a clean break at that time from decades of ever-increasing governmental interference in the economy. He entered Congress as a small businessman, a banker, who understood that the engine of America's greatness is its private sector. Then-Congressman MACK took Ronald Reagan's political banner as his own. As CONNIE has written, "It can be summed up in one word: freedom." President Reagan inspired him into public service, and he has eloquently defended conservatism's most deeply held principles: limited government, standing up for democratic allies around the world, lowering the tax burden that Americans bear, taming the bureaucracy and the special interests, and returning to citizens control over their own lives.

We agreed on public policy questions, Senator MACK and I. But having said that, I also know that my colleagues who opposed him on issues admire and

like him every bit as much as I do. CONNIE MACK is that kind of person.

Senator MACK said on the floor of the Senate recently—it was on an important foreign policy matter—that "we must speak the truth and stand on principle." That is what he has done daily. That is the virtuous example he has set. It is what has made him such a good public servant for Florida and America.

Mr. President, I know we will all miss our colleague, CONNIE MACK.

#### TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JOHN ASHCROFT

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I want to say a few words about the wonderful work that my colleague, JOHN ASHCROFT, has done in the Senate during the last 6 years. Our colleague from Missouri has racked up an enviable list of accomplishments in his time in the Senate.

As you know, he was responsible for the "charitable choice" provision in the landmark 1996 welfare reform law, a provision that allows faith-based organizations to compete for Government resources to help poor families. These organizations had previously been shut out of the process. The Ashcroft provision gained such strong, bipartisan support that he has expanded it so that faith-based groups can now participate in Federal substance abuse treatment programs. Senator ASHCROFT has truly helped America find better ways to attack the problems we face in our communities.

He also led the way on another major public policy improvement in the area of Social Security. Social Security, as we know, has had surpluses routinely raided to finance deficit spending of the Federal Government. JOHN was a key Member of Congress who drew attention to, and halted, this practice so that these moneys are now used to pay benefits and only to pay benefits. He introduced the first lockbox proposal in the Senate. And, at his urging, budget procedures were changed so that the objectionable practice of diverting Social Security funds to pay for other Government operations could literally be ruled out of order.

I want to conclude by saying what an honor it has been to serve with a man of such intellect, compassion, and notable integrity as JOHN ASHCROFT. He has distinguished himself as a Missouri Senator, its Governor, its auditor, and its attorney general. One thing is certain: we have not seen the last of JOHN ASHCROFT. I trust that what lies ahead for someone of his caliber is further and even greater service to his State and to his country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

#### ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the hour of 12:30 p.m. the Senate stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m. in order for the weekly party caucuses to meet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT  
AGREEMENT—H.J. RES. 126

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 p.m., the Senate proceed to H.J. Res. 126, the continuing resolution; further, that no amendments or motions be in order, and that there be 15 minutes equally divided between the chairman and the ranking member; that following that time the resolution be immediately read the third time, and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of the resolution, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

SENATOR STROM THURMOND'S  
98TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to add a few accolades to those that have already been expressed on the 98th birthday of our very distinguished and able colleague, Senator THURMOND.

Senator THURMOND and I have worked together in this Chamber for 42 years. I say this with a considerable amount of pleasure. I have always found Senator THURMOND to be straightforward, courageous—he is absolutely fearless—and always considerate of the viewpoints of others. We were here during the great civil rights debates of the 1960s. We have seen colleagues come and go. We have shared viewpoints on many of the great issues that have been debated upon this stage in the years that have gone by: The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Panama Canal Treaties in the late 1970s—the many issues that have deeply affected our country and the people of our country.

While Senator THURMOND and I belong to different political parties, I think we have attempted to see through the fog of political debate, and we have attempted to speak and act in the best interests of the country as a whole. We have often risen above the political fray.

Senator THURMOND has always been very courteous to me. I can remember those years, now long ago, when Senator THURMOND lost his wife. He was a Democrat in those years, and I remember coming into the Senate Chamber on that morning after. Senator THURMOND sat there in the back row behind me that morning. I walked up to him, shook his hand, and told him of my sorrow at his loss.

I can remember when Senator THURMOND lost his daughter. I went to South Carolina to be with him in that time of trial and tribulation and sorrow. I saw the great outpouring of affection and love by his constituents in South Carolina.

I remember, too, the day in which there was a memorial service conducted for my grandson, Michael, who was tragically killed at the age of 17. I recall that at that memorial service there were two other Senators present—Senator Randolph, my colleague at that time in the Senate, and Senator THURMOND. My colleague today, Senator ROCKEFELLER, was there, but he was at that time the Governor of the State of West Virginia.

I shall never forget when STROM THURMOND came to my side at that moment of great sorrow when I gave up my grandson. Senator THURMOND has always been a Senator who sympathizes with the sorrows, the sadness, and the joys of his colleagues.

I went out here some distance from the Capitol a few years ago to attend the funeral service of a relative of one of my staff members. This relative was a black man. Who came to that funeral service? Me. I was there because it was a relative of one of my staff members. Senator THURMOND was there. He came there to show his sympathy and his concern to those bereaved people.

I marveled at his presence on that occasion. It made me wonder, how many funerals of persons of other races, of other parties, and of other creeds does this man attend around this city?

Let me just say today that it has also been not just a pleasure to serve with Senator THURMOND but it has been an honor. I salute him on this his 98th birthday.

Abraham lived to be 175. Isaac lived to be 180. Jacob lived to be 147. Joshua lived to be 110. Joseph lived to be 110. Moses lived to be 120. STROM THURMOND is only 98. I thank the good Lord that I can be here today to share with him this birthday of his.

Let me close by remembering a few lines, if I might, that were written by a poet.

Count your garden by the flowers,  
Never by the leaves that fall.  
Count your days by the sunny hours,  
Not remembering clouds at all.  
Count your nights by stars, not shadows.  
Count your life by smiles, not tears.

On this beautiful December afternoon, Senator THURMOND:

Count your age by friends, not years.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I wish to thank the able Senator from West Virginia for his kind remarks. He is a man of character, a man of ability, a man of dedication, a man for whom all of us have high respect.

He has done a fine job here in the Senate. Although we are in different parties, we have so much in common. I have enjoyed being here with him, and I thank him for his great service to his State and to our Nation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I understand Senator HARKIN wishes to make a few remarks before the Senate recesses and before the meetings of the

two parties. I hope someone will indicate to Senator HARKIN that the floor is now available, if he would come at this time.

I understand he is on his way. If the Chair would just momentarily desist from using the gavel.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will the Senator from West Virginia yield?

Mr. BYRD. Yes. I yield, if I have the floor, Mr. President.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from West Virginia for his kind remarks in behalf of the birthday of our colleague from South Carolina, Senator THURMOND. Those were excellent remarks and tribute to a man with whom we have been proud to serve.

I would like to note, because the Senator is such a historian, that someone handed me a little piece of history which might be instructive to us in the days ahead.

The year was 1881, when a special session of the Senate convened on March 4, 1881. The session was called for the exclusive purpose of handling Cabinet and agency nominations for the new administration of President James Garfield. Republicans and Democrats were split evenly 37-37, with 2 independent Senators. Under normal circumstances, this short session should have lasted about 11 days. Due to intense partisanship, it resulted in deadlock. It ran for 11 weeks.

I hope that is a lesson to those of us who are trying to find a reasonable way to resolve our new challenge in the new Congress; that there are ways to do it so we can avoid that kind of deadlock and that kind of delay.

I see the Senator from Iowa present.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield, the two independent Senators on that occasion came from the State of Illinois. One was David Davis, a former Member of the Supreme Court. The other was William Mahone who hailed from the great State of Virginia, the mother of Presidents.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION  
APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, over a month has passed since the Republican and Democratic negotiators came to agreement on the health and education appropriations bill for this year. As I said back then, the agreement was reached as a product of long and difficult bipartisan negotiations. Senator STEVENS, Senator BYRD, Senator SPECTER, and I, along with Congressmen BILL YOUNG, Congressman DAVID OBEY, and Congressman JOHN PORTER, worked for months to craft this agreement.

Chairman STEVENS and Chairman YOUNG had been charged by their leadership to lead these negotiations to closure so that we could pass this very